

G O N Z A L O R U B A L C A B A

www.gonzalorubalcaba.com



Sir Simon Rattle has called the Cuban jazz pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba... “the most gifted pianist on the planet” ...

Dizzy Gillespie’s remarks (1985) on first hearing Gonzalo ... “the greatest pianist I’ve heard in the last 10 years” ...

Charlie Haden once remarked... “Gonzalo is the master of musical structures, he is a smart heart” ...

Ben Ratliff, The New York Times ... “Meticulous Jazzman of the World” “he has an almost eerie control over his sound, as if he were playing the strings directly instead of using the keys as intermediaries” ...

Howard Reich, Chicago Tribune ... “Gonzalo Rubalcaba ranks among the most accomplished jazz pianists in the world today and perhaps stands at the top of that elite group, thanks to a colossal technique and an unfettered musical imagination” ...

Howard Reich, Chicago Tribune ... “Rubalcaba’s pianism is something of a quasi-classical recital, Rubalcaba draws as much from his classic idioms as his jazz lexicon, eradicating barriers between the two, albeit in decidedly contemporary terms. Only a pianist with Rubalcaba’s footing in both classical and jazz orthodoxies could have pulled it off”

Ferdinand Brau, Bösendorfer ... “We consider ourselves fortunate to have Gonzalo Rubalcaba, one of the great pianists, musicians, and virtuosos of Jazz, at our side as a Bösendorfer Artist. It is a great pleasure to be able to accompany the musical path of a great artist and performer with our instruments and thus be a part of it.”

In 1999, the multi-Grammy® Winner, pianist, and composer Gonzalo Rubalcaba was selected by Piano & Keyboard Magazine as one of the great pianists of the 20th century, alongside figures such as Glenn Gould, Martha Argerich and Bill Evans. He has won three Grammys® and Four Latin Grammys, 21 Grammys nominations, he has been awarded the EMPIK Bestsellers prizes, “Palmarés”, awarded by the prestigious institution “Grand Prix De L'ACADEMIE DU JAZZ” and a “Les Victoires du Jazz”, all of which has established him as a creative force in the jazz world.

Gonzalo was born on May 27, 1963, into a musical family in Havana. His father, pianist, composer, and bandleader Guillermo Rubalcaba had also played in the orchestra of Enrique Jorrín, the creator of cha-cha-cha; his grandfather Jacobo Rubalcaba, was the composer of classic danzones, and his two brothers were also musicians. Gonzalo, a child prodigy who by the age of 6 was playing drums in his father’s orchestra, started his formal training two years later. He chose the piano as his main instrument to, as he once recalled, “just to please my mother.” He graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts in Havana with a degree in composition and by his mid-teens he was working as both drummer and pianist in the hotels, concert halls and jazz clubs of Havana. Following graduation, he stepped right into the life of the popular musician, touring Cuba, Europe, Africa and Asia with the fabled Orquesta Aragón and as a sideman in jazz groups and, beginning in 1984, leading his own Afro-Cuban jazz rock fusion band, “Grupo Proyecto.”

The encounters with Gillespie and, in 1986, with Charlie Haden and then Blue Note Records president, Bruce Lundvall, set the stage to finally showcase Rubalcaba’s talent before jazz audiences in the United States. These years are documented in a series of recordings in Havana and Frankfurt, Germany, including three superb recordings with his Cuban Quartet on the German label Messidor: *Mi Gran Pasión* (1987), *Live in Havana* (1989) and *Giraldilla* (1990). Rubalcaba moved to the Dominican Republic in 1991 and settled in Miami in 1996.

His international recording career, which includes titles such as *Discovery – Live at Montreux*, *Images-- Live at Mt. Fuji*, *The Blessing*, *Suite 4 y 20*, *Rapsodia*, *Diz* and *Imagine – Gonzalo Rubalcaba in the USA*, has garnered him 19 nominations including three Grammys and four Latin Grammys. He won Grammys for *Nocturne* (2001) and *Land of the Sun* (2004), two collections of Latin ballads and boleros recorded with bassist Charlie Haden and *SKYLINE* (2022), a reunion of old friends Ron Carter and Jack DeJohnette. He won Latin Grammys for *Solo* (2006), *Supernova* (2002), *Live in Marciac* (2022) with the singer Aymée Nuviola, and *Vida- Omara* (2023) – Omara Portuondo Album as a producer.

In 2010, Gonzalo founded 5Passion Records with the businessman Gary Galimidi, and since then, the label has not only released Rubalcaba’s latest recordings such as *Fe* (2011), *XXI* (2012), *Volcan* (2014), *Live Faith* (2015), the Latin Grammy nominated *Suite Caminos* (2015) and *Charlie* (2016), but also albums by artists such as Will Vinson, Ignacio Berroa, Yosvany Terry and many more. In addition to “5Passion Records”, Gonzalo joined the "Top Stop Music" record label family in 2020 to record/release the Grammy-nominated *Viento y Tiempo live at Blue Note Tokyo* with singer Aymée Nuviola. In 2020, his independent Record label 5Passion was restructured in partnership with the businessman Ariel López and released the album *SKYLINE* (2021). The album won the Grammy® Award in the category of *Best Jazz Instrumental Album*

(2022), with Rubalcaba becoming the first Latin American musician to do so as a leader in the *Best Instrumental Jazz Album* category.

Reflecting his interest in music education, Rubalcaba joined the faculty of the University of Miami's Frost School of Music in 2015. In 2020, he founded his own academy (*Rubalcademy*), offering remote Masterclasses to musicians across the world. Another of his nominations was with singer, pop and soul music Jon Secada with the album *SOLOS* was for the 2021 Latin Grammy® Awards, under the Oleta Music record label.

In 2022, he won his last Latin Grammy for "Best Traditional Tropical Album" in the company of the incomparable singer Aymée Nuviola with the project *Live in Marciac* under his Record label 5Passion Records. 2023 was awarded in the category of Album of the Year, with the prestigious French award "Les Victoires du Jazz" together with saxophonist Pierrick Pédrón with the album *Pédrón Rubalcaba*. In the current year 2024 he had the honor of being awarded by the prestigious Jazz Institution "Académie du Jazz" to receive together with Pierrick Pédrón the "Palmarés" - "Album of the year 2023" – with the album *Pédrón Rubalcaba*- "Grand Prix De L'ACADEMIE DU JAZZ 2023 "

His latest discography production, *Borrowed Roses* – piano Solo, (released by the record label “Top Stop Music”) has been highly admired by specialized critics, selected as one of “*The best jazz albums of 2023*” around the world. This virtuoso musician and considered one of the leading artists in Afro-Cuban jazz, has received worldwide acclaim from outlets such as the Wall Street Journal, NPR, Downbeat, the Chicago Tribune, New York Time, Jazz Life, Jazz Times, Jazziz, and others.

